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Oil and Gas Lease Sale Generates \$30,961,806



Pam Eldridge

BLM-Alaska State Director Tom Lonnie was all smiles after the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) lease sale on Sept. 24, 2008, in Anchorage. Five companies—Anadarko Petroleum Corp., ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc., Petro-Canada Alaska, Inc., FEX L.P., and Petro-Hunt, L.L.C.—submitted winning bids totaling \$30,961,806 for the right to develop oil and gas within the 23 million-acre petroleum reserve. The potential lease tracts total 1,656,574 million acres, an area about the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined.

“The companies who submitted bids today have demonstrated their interest in developing new sources of oil and gas that will reduce our nation’s dependency on imported oil,” Lonnie said after the sale. “Development of these energy resources in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska will help meet America’s energy needs through domestic production. I think [the lease sale] was quite successful.”

Several company representatives told the media they were also happy with the sale. David Brown of ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc., told reporters, “We bid on 47 tracts, and won 33. I think we won the ones we really wanted, and we are pleased with the result.” Petro-Hunt, L.L.C. of Texas bid the highest amount for a single tract at nearly \$650,000. Petro-Hunt’s W. Hubbard Hunt said the area is under-evaluated and needs further work. He anticipated that once the leases are awarded, his company will be ready to analyze further what has been done in the past and see what they can do to enhance it.

The State of Alaska also benefits from the lease sale. Half of the money received for the leases, just over \$15 million, goes to the State. The lease sale offered 450 tracts of land (approximately 4.8 million acres). Prior to the lease sale, BLM-Alaska had 3 million acres leased within the NPR-A.

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Pam Eldridge



(left to right) Deputy State Director for Resources Ted Murphy, Acting Associate State Director Vince Galterio, and Alaska State Director Tom Lonnie before unsealing the bids.

Will NPR-A oil and gas development produce results? The U.S. Geological Survey estimated in 2001 that 5.9 to 13.2 billion barrels (a mean of 9.3 billion barrels) of technically recoverable oil and 39.1 to 83.2 trillion cubic feet (a mean of 59.7 trillion cubic feet) of technically recoverable natural gas lie under the 23 million-acre NPR-A. *Technically* recoverable resources are the amounts that may be recovered using current technology without regard to cost. Winning bids do not always mean development. The cost of finding, developing, producing, and transporting the oil and natural gas need to be *economically* recoverable for those holding the leases.

The economic viability of the natural gas resources depends on the availability of a pipeline to transport the product to market.

The reserve was first set aside by President Harding in 1923 as an emergency oil supply for the U.S. Navy. In 1976, in accordance with the Naval Petroleum Reserve Production Act, the administration of the reserve was transferred to the BLM and became the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.



For more information about the lease sale, visit the Web site: http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/energy/oil_gas/npra/npra_leasing/08_leasesale_factsheet.html

New and Revised BLM Publications

Many are available on the BLM-Alaska Web site:
http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/info/gen_pubs.html

General Publications

- 2008 Alaska Mining Claim Operations Guide (interagency with State and Forest Service) (N)
- Alaska Archaeology Month Iditarod poster series (N) Available for purchase through the Government Printing Office Bookstore
- Alaska Freshwater Fishing brochure (R)
- Alaska River Adventures brochure (R)
- Alaska Special Recreation Permit application packet (N)
- ANCSA 17(b) Easements brochure (N)
- Birch Creek National Wild River and map (R)
- BLM in Alaska brochure (R)
- BLM National Recreation poster (N)
- Campbell Creek Science Center 2008-09 School Year calendar poster featuring a porcupine (N)
- Campbell Tract Leaf newsletter (N)
- Denali Highway Points of Interest brochure (R)
- Driving the Dalton Highway: Rules of the Road rack card (R)
- Eagle Summit: Window to the Midnight Sun (R)
- Eagle-Fort Egbert: A Remnant of the Past-Adventures in the Past Series No. 5 (R)
- Fieldnotes-Glennallen Field Office newsletter (N)
- Fire Along the Dalton Highway 2008 (R)
- Gulkana River Floaters Guide (R)
- North Slope Science Initiative brochure (R), newsletter (N), and Report to Congress (N)
- Taylor Highway: Fortymile Gold Country, Tetlin Junction to Boundary travel guide (R)
- Unit 13B Federal Subsistence Hunting map (R)
- White Mountains National Recreation Area: Winter Trails and Cabins with map (R)

Open File Reports (New)

- OFR 116 Water Resources and Channel Geometry of Birch Creek National Wild River, by Jon Kostoryhs
- OFR 119 Assessment of the Potential for Bison Introduction and Grazing in McCarthy's Marsh by Kyle Joly
- OFR 120 McCarthys Marsh Caribou Winter Range Transects: Vegetative Changes from 1997 to 2006 by Kyle Joly and Randi R. Jandt

Technical Reports (New)

- TR 58 Rare Vascular Plant Species of the North Slope, Alaska, by Dave Yokel and others
- TR 59 How Succession Affects Fire Behavior in Boreal Black Spruce Forest of Interior Alaska by James Cronan and Randi Jandt

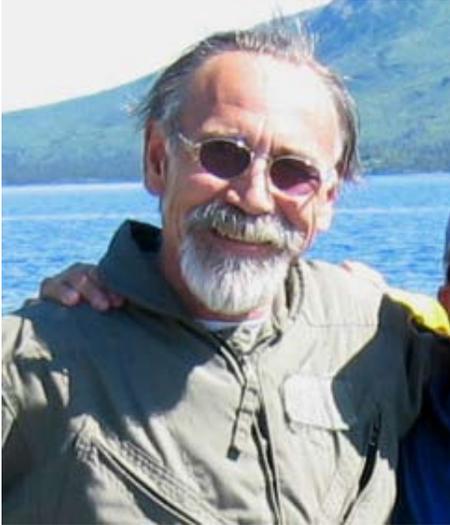
Planning Documents

<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning.html>

- Bay Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (N)
- Colville River Special Area Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (N)
- East Alaska Record of Decision (Rep)
- Gulkana National Wild River Record of Decision (N)
- Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Record of Decision (N)
- Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Final Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (N)
- Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Record of Decision (N)
- Ring of Fire Record of Decision (N)

N = New, R = Revised, Rep = Reprint

Dugan Nielsen: BLM's Bristol Bay Connection



"Things that walk on the land, swim in the water, fly in the air...these are important to the people of Bristol Bay."
—Dugan Nielsen

The BLM Anchorage Field Office is establishing a new field station in Dillingham in the heart of Bristol Bay country. Dugan Nielsen, BLM land transfer specialist, will staff the new station as the BLM's Bristol Bay connection.

A local face

Nielsen's roots have always been firmly anchored in Dillingham, with his family and the people of Bristol Bay, even when he worked out of Anchorage. A former realty officer with the Bristol Bay Native Association, Nielsen came to the BLM in 2004, around the time the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act passed.

"When the BLM offered me a job, I wasn't sure at first. Then Gary Reimer [now Anchorage District Manager] told me he wanted me to work from Dillingham. That's when I said 'yes!'"

Nielsen's familiarity with the people and his knowledge of the issues of the Bristol Bay region are precisely why the BLM needs him. Nielsen provides important links to the villages and residents of Bristol Bay—links critical to getting those villages to full entitlement under the

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA).

Nielsen also helps Native allotment applicants navigate the complex maze of steps to get to that final Certificate of Allotment. Nielsen says this isn't a simple journey—he knows this journey personally.

"When my application for a Native allotment was pending, the correspondence I received [from the BLM] was complex," Nielsen explains. "I was familiar with the allotment process, but I wondered how elders not familiar with the process could possibly understand what's required of them."

Nielsen uses his skills and his relationships to get Native allotment applicants through the process. "I know a lot of people and a lot of people know me," he says with an easy laugh. "When we're approached by someone we know, it's easier to get a line of communication going. You can get to work quicker."

Nielsen's relationships with the people of Bristol Bay country are also an asset to the BLM during land use planning. He makes sure residents and tribal entities are engaged in planning decisions that affect their region and their livelihood.



Robin Rodriguez

Nielsen locates a survey monument during a Native allotment field exam.

Have a presence

As the BLM moves from land use planning toward implementing the decisions in the Bay plan, Nielsen offers some advice to the BLM: "Don't be this anonymous agency. Have a presence out here, get out here regularly, listen to the people. Communicate face to face whenever possible. Know what's important to our people. This is salmon country; we live and die by our fish."

Nielsen says having a small office in Dillingham where residents can come in and talk to the BLM is a positive step: "It says we're not going to be managers from afar."

—Teresa McPherson
teresa_mcpherson@blm.gov



Casey Reeves

Dugan Nielsen and BLM Fairbanks District hydrologist Ben Kennedy conduct stream surveys at Jacksmith Creek in the Bay planning area.

East Teshekpuk Well Site Cleanup—Mission Accomplished!

Erosion from wind, sea and ice is changing the profile of Alaska’s Beaufort Sea coastline and placing some of the 136 exploratory wells and core holes scattered through the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska at risk. When the U.S. Navy and U.S. Geological Survey drilled these wells in the 1940s to 1970s, coastal erosion was a relatively insignificant problem. Since then, shoreline pack ice has slowly disappeared. As the ice moves offshore, it leaves Alaska’s shores vulnerable to damage from the full force of storms and increases the possibilities for petroleum-laced contaminants and other toxins to leak into the sea or adjacent freshwater lakes.

The U.S. Geological Survey temporarily plugged the East Teshekpuk well on the eastern shore of the lake and back-filled the reserve pit when the agency left the area. However, the well bore continued to store an estimated 15,000 gallons of diesel fuel from a depth of 2,400 feet to the surface. Wind-driven erosion at the well site exposed buried solid waste and opened the reserve pit, posing a potential threat to Teshekpuk Lake, the North Slope’s largest freshwater lake.

Last winter, the BLM contracted with Alaska Native-owned Marsh Creek, L.L.C., to plug, excavate, transport and dispose of the reserve pit contaminants off-site for the East Teshekpuk legacy well. In extreme arctic conditions, Marsh Creek removed the diesel fuel and reserve pit contaminants, and then trucked the hazardous materials across 17 miles of temporary ice



Aerial photo of Atigaru and the Beaufort Sea coastline.

roads to the inactive North Kalikpik well site, which is not threatened with erosion. Marsh Creek plugged the East Teshekpuk legacy well and completed excavation of the reserve pit within four months and ahead of schedule.

“Wrapping up the work in one season eliminated the need for interim storage and management of the waste products and saved the Bureau an estimated \$3 million,” said Wayne Svejnoha, Program Lead for BLM-Alaska’s Hazardous Materials Program.

The BLM will continue to monitor all of the reserve’s legacy wells and will now focus on remediating two more at-risk legacy wells—Atigaru Point and Drew Point.

In August, the State of Alaska conducted its final inspection to issue permanent closure of the East Teshekpuk legacy well site.

—Carol Akerelrea
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(left) “X” marks the spot for metal debris found contaminating the reserve pit. (bottom left) Preparing to pressure test and perforate the well before plugging it. (bottom center) A front end loader removing solid waste from the reserve pit. (below) An aerial photo of the excavated area, August 2008. The waters of Teshekpuk Lake are covering the well site.



Wayne Svejnoha



Wayne Svejnoha



Wayne Svejnoha



Wayne Svejnoha

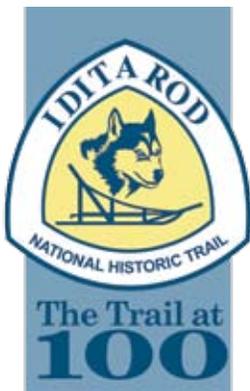
THE IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS CONTINUE: 2008-2012

This winter, celebrate the official Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial commemorating a vibrant hundred years of activity. The trail that is so important to recreationists today first connected ancient Alaska Native villages and was later developed as an overland route from Seward to Nome for thousands of gold-seekers who hiked or mushed the trail to the Iditarod gold fields. Opening that route brought a population boom that led to Alaska's designation as a U.S. Territory in 1912. The trail was designated a National Historic Trail in 1978.

The Iditarod National Historic Trail is unique in Alaskan and American history. It represents the last vestiges of a truly remote and wild trail system that today remains much the same as it was 75 years ago. Only small portions of the trail are accessible during the summer months due to the thick, wet, tundra vegetation and voracious mosquitoes. But when the tundra and rivers are frozen, dog mushers, skiers, snowmachiners, hikers, and even mountain bikers use the trail. Explore the opportunities and celebrate the legacy.

The Iditarod is a complex trail system, stretching from Seward in the south to Nome on the Bering Sea. It crosses land owned by several Alaska Native corporations, municipal governments and the State of Alaska, as well as federal land managed by the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Defense. In all, there are 10 institutional land managers and numerous private owners. The BLM, under the National Trails Act, is the designated Trail Administrator, and coordinates efforts by federal and state agencies on behalf of the entire Trail.

Revamped Iditarod National Historic Trail Web site!



The BLM Iditarod National Historic Trail Web site got a face-lift and the Trail Centennial got a new official logo (shown left) this summer. The Web site will be the headquarters for centennial celebration information and facts about the history of the trail and the ongoing stewardship by the many agencies who manage it. Check out all the celebration events at the Web site below!

www.blm.gov/ak/en/prog/sa/iditarod.html

Check it Out On-line!

BLM-Alaska manages four public shelter cabins— Tripod Flats, Old Woman, Bear Creek, and Rohn—along the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The Tripod Flats and Old Woman shelter cabins are on the heavily traveled Kaltag Portage between Unalakleet and Kaltag, with Tripod Flats cabin 35 miles from Kaltag and Old Woman cabin 15 miles farther. The Bear Creek and Rohn shelter cabins are between Nikolai and

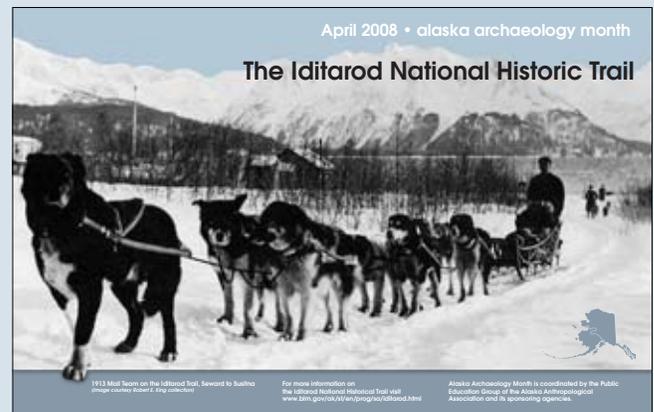


Tripod Flats cabin

Rohn in the remote Farewell Burn. Use of these cabins is free and no reservations are required. Users may need to share the cabin with others in extreme weather conditions. Each cabin is equipped with bunks, a woodstove, and outhouses. A map for these cabins is available from:

http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sa/iditarod/inht_cabins.html

A poster celebrating the Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial won the Society of American Archaeology's national 2008 poster competition. The poster is great for classrooms and is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office bookstore for \$7 each at: <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> and search for "Iditarod."



The BLM Web site contains the Iditarod National Historic Trail Visitor Guide, the Governor's Proclamation for the Iditarod Historic Trail Centennial, and more.

The official site of the annual Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, held each March, is <http://www.iditarod.com>.

Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance also has centennial information at <http://www.iditarod100.com>.





Journey into Alaska's Past

with *BLM-Alaska Archaeologist Robert King*

The Quest for Alaska's Gold: Before the 1908 Rush to Iditarod

This year is the 100th anniversary of the discovery of gold in the Iditarod area of Interior Alaska. How and why was gold found in such a remote location? Was the discovery by accident, or was there a long history leading up to the legendary gold strike?

All gold discoveries are more or less accidents. The 60 years before the 1908 Iditarod Gold Rush is a fascinating story of persistence and sometimes lost opportunities, including a little-known connection to the major discovery of gold in California. The discovery of gold in January 1848 at John Sutter's mill in California ignited one of the greatest gold rushes in world history. The California strike spurred the Russian-American Company, which held a monopoly over trade in Russian America, to search for gold in Alaska. The Company hired a young Russian mining engineer, Peter Doroshin, to explore for mineral wealth on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula. Although Doroshin found traces of both gold and coal over the next few years, he discovered nothing significant.

In retrospect, the Russians probably had second thoughts about pursuing mineral wealth in Alaska. They would not benefit from gold rush stampedes invading and possibly taking control of Russian America. The Territory was already difficult to manage from far-away Moscow. History would later prove these fears were realistic.

During the early 1860s, before the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, two miners named Choquette and Carpenter found placer gold in gravel bars on the Stikine River in the Telegraph Creek area, over 60 miles east of the present U.S.-Canada



Glen Barnett

Prospector Peter Miscovich panning for gold in Flat, Alaska.



Alaska State Library

Treadwell Mine on Douglas Island, Southeast Alaska, produced nearly \$62 million up to the date of the cave-in April 22, 1917. Douglas was incorporated in 1902 and by 1910 was the largest city in Southeast Alaska.

border. Throughout 1861, hundreds of determined prospectors entered Russian America near Wrangell, a small Russian settlement and fort. There, they ascended the Stikine River to reach the new gold fields in what became northwestern British Columbia. This influx could only make the Russians more concerned about what would happen if someone discovered gold within Russian America. Those fears became moot when the United States purchased Russian America in 1867, two years after the American Civil War ended. Now all of Alaska could be explored.

After the initial rush of prospectors to Southeast Alaska in the 1860s, there were several minor gold discoveries in the region. These included Sumdum Bay in 1870 (less than 100 miles south of what became Juneau) and Indian River in 1871 near Sitka.

Around 1873, prospectors began their first explorations in the Yukon River drainage of Interior Alaska. Jack McQuesten, Arthur Harper, and one-time circus acrobat Alfred Mayo mixed prospecting into their early trading and trapping efforts.

In the 1880s the first major gold strikes occurred in both the Yukon basin and in Southeast Alaska. In 1880, rich gold deposits in the Juneau vicinity were attributed to Joe Juneau and Richard Harris. Although these men most often get the credit for the world-class discovery, the real discoverer was Chief Kowee, an Auk Indian from Admiralty Island. Kowee brought the first ore samples to Sitka, where entrepreneur George Pilz grubstaked Juneau and Harris to accompany Kowee to the source of his gold. Instead, the pair traded their rations with the Indians for home brew, or Hoochinoo, and never got far from the beach. When the empty-handed prospectors headed back to Sitka, Kowee followed them with more ore. Pilz sent the two back again, and Kowee literally dragged the reluctant prospectors up Gold Creek to what is now Silver Bow Basin. Although the story is conflicting at this point, it appears that Juneau and Harris loaded 1,000 pounds of gold ore into their canoe and headed for Canada. Another of Pilz's prospectors encountered them, forcing them at gunpoint

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to return to Pitz. Thus began Alaska's first big gold rush.

In Interior Alaska, the first major rush began after 1886. Howard Franklin and Henry Madison discovered coarse gold in the Fortymile River. This first major gold discovery eventually attracted up to 10,000 miners. While most prospectors left disappointed, others began prospecting other parts of the District of Alaska. By 1893, miners had found gold in the foothills of the Brooks Range along the upper reaches of the Koyukuk River. By the mid-1890s, promising gold discoveries showed up near Rampart and Circle City in the Yukon River drainage. Some of these finds are still being mined today.

On Aug. 17, 1896, George Washington Carmack and his Indian brothers-in-law, "Skookum Jim" and "Tagish Charley," accidentally discovered placer gold on Rabbit (later Bonanza) Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River. The incredibly rich Klondike gold discovery near the future Dawson City in Yukon Territory blew the lid off of any hesitancy to explore other parts of northwestern Canada and Alaska for gold.

Gold fever swept the world! Tens of thousands of hopeful gold-seekers flooded into the Klondike. Nearly all of the richest Klondike claims were staked by early 1897 by the Fortymile miners—long before word ever reached the rest of the world. This caused most Klondike Gold Rush stampedes to return home broke.

In 1899, the new rush was to Nome. Inland gold deposits were discovered in late 1898, followed by more gold found in Nome's beach sands.

As the 20th century began, more discoveries followed in Interior Alaska. Felix Pedro's find in 1902 on Pedro Creek led to further development of what became the city of Fairbanks. There were lesser rushes to even more remote places, such as Valdez Creek in 1903 (50 miles east of Cantwell on the southern flanks of the Alaska Range), or the Kantishna District in 1906 (within today's Denali National Park and Preserve).

With the new rushes, a pattern developed. New gold discoveries (and rumors of discoveries) typically brought in both gold-seekers from the Lower 48 and elsewhere, and veterans of prior stampedes with their unfulfilled dreams of wealth.

Prospectors found more gold in other Yukon River tributaries, including 1906-

07 strikes near Ophir Creek and Ganes Creek in the Innoko River drainage.

The Innoko River and Nome discoveries were important to the later 1908 Iditarod gold rush. During Christmas of 1908, prospectors John Beaton and William Dikeman were exploring the nearby Iditarod River drainage in the Innoko region, and hit rich gold. With their discovery, the rush to Alaska's legendary Iditarod gold country was on! A thriving town called "Iditarod" was born (now abandoned). Meanwhile, surveyors worked the winter trail to connect the Nome gold fields with the Cook Inlet region through the Innoko country, with better access to the new Iditarod Mining District. This winter trail became known as the Iditarod Trail and is now an Alaska legend.

By 1909–1910, the gold in Iditarod created one last great rush for Alaska. Although prospectors found more gold after the Iditarod gold rush and continue to mine in Alaska today, none of these finds achieved the "old time" flavor and frenzy

Largest gold nugget found during the Alaska gold rushes. Pioneer Mining Company discovered this nugget on Sept. 14, 1901, on Anvil Creek near Nome. Weighing 182 Troy ounces, the nugget was worth \$1,552 (\$164,346 or more today). Only the Alaska Centennial Nugget, found in 1998 near Ruby when it rolled off a pile of dirt ahead of a bulldozer, is larger at 294.10 Troy ounces. Photo courtesy of Kevin Keeler.



Long Tom Sluice Box

of the Iditarod gold rush. With the end of the Iditarod gold rush, the romance associated with Alaska's great gold rush history was never quite the same.

—Robert King
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Prospectors create a tent city in Nome in July 1900.

Alaska Historical Archives

Courtesy of Kevin Keeler



INVASIVE WEEDS IN ALASKA: A SPREADING THREAT TO THE ARCTIC ECOSYSTEM

Don't let these pretty purple flowers fool you. Bird vetch (*Vicia cracca*), sometimes called Tufted vetch, is an invasive species that is very efficient at spreading its seeds a considerable distance. The seedpods are shaped like a pea pod, and when the pods are ready they burst open and expel the seeds in every direction.

These flowering plants brighten the roadside view with lush purples, bright yellows and pure whites. Even their names are pleasing: bird vetch, white sweet clover and oxeye daisy. Yet these and other plants are no beauties. They are invasive weeds and are changing Alaska's landscape as they spread.

Ruth Gronquist, BLM-Alaska wildlife biologist and Fairbanks District weed coordinator, is charged with educating the public about how invasive weeds, such as white sweet clover, are spreading above the Arctic Circle and along the Dalton Highway, in particular. The prolific clover can choke out native vegetation along highways, trails and rivers. This aggressive weed propagates by dropping hundreds of thousands of small, hardy seeds that can remain viable in the soil for decades.

Gronquist, in March 2008, gave the BLM-Alaska Resource Advisory Council an overview of the BLM's weed management strategy for the Dalton Highway Management Area. Five months later in August, the Council took a field trip to Coldfoot and the Dalton

Highway to see the impact of white sweet clover and bird vetch.

White sweet clover grows in the soft shoulders of the highway where traffic and wind carry seeds to new areas. The clover now grows as far north as Coldfoot. Gronquist is concerned that the clover will soon take hold on stream banks where currently there are no invasive plants.

Just like the clover that grows in suburban lawns, white sweet clover fixes nitrogen in the soil—but unlike the lawn-variety clover that grows as small plants close to the ground, white sweet clover can grow several feet tall in just a couple of years. Its stem and root ball resemble the size of an adult's wrist and fist and each mature plant produces thousands of seeds. Alaska's wild animals do not eat white sweet clover, which is moderately toxic to animals if ingested.

White sweet clover is a biennial plant. Eliminating the first-year plants before flowering is the best time to attack the problem. Although labor intensive, hand weeding is currently the most effective solution while the white sweet clover is still contained along the shoulders of the Dalton Highway. Removing second-year plants, taproot and all, is also highly effective when done before it goes to seed.

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BLM-Alaska RAC members Amalie Couvillion (center) and Scott Hala (right) pull first-year white sweet clover growing along the soft shoulder of the Dalton Highway in northern Alaska. The large patch of clover is dense and bright green.

WEEDS —continued from page 8

At Milepost 170 of the Dalton Highway above the Arctic Circle, which is five miles south of Coldfoot Camp, the “northern-most truck stop in America,” Gronquist and BLM intern Rehanon Nehus met BLM-Alaska State Director Tom Lonnie, Fairbanks District Manager Bob Schneider, other BLMers and several Resource Advisory Council members at Rosie Creek for a morning of invasive weed education and weed-pulling. Rosie Creek is 250 miles north of Fairbanks.

The group donned safety vests for visibility and knee pads for protection, and went to work pulling weeds. The work crew filled eight large trash bags with approximately 480 pounds of white sweet clover and bird vetch. Gronquist explained that instead of dumping the weeds in a landfill, the bags and contents are burned. Gronquist will return to the site in summer 2009 to monitor it and study the effectiveness of the weed-pulling efforts.

Concern for the future is that white sweet clover and other invasive plants will choke out the indigenous vegetation by sheer numbers of plants, by altering soil moisture and chemistry, and by shading out native plants or inhibiting germination. Combine the rapid growth and spread rate of invasive weeds with a warming climate, and very real problems could lie ahead for the Alaska’s arctic and boreal ecosystems. With this hands-on field trip, the Council members have a better understanding of an important BLM-Alaska program and what the agency is facing as it manages public lands in the Arctic.

—Pam Eldridge
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Pam Eldridge

First-year white sweet clover, *Melilotus alba*, displayed on an 8x10 inch whiteboard, doesn’t look like much of a threat. By the second year, however, the clover can reach three to four feet in height and have a stem and root ball the size of an adult’s wrist and fist. The weed’s explosive growth rate makes pulling it while small an important part of controlling its spread.



For more information about BLM-Alaska’s invasive weed programs, visit the Web site:
<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/noxweeds.html>.

BLM-Alaska Welcomes New Field Manager



Teresa McPherson

James Fincher assumed the post of Anchorage Field Manager on Aug. 17. He brings nine years of line officer experience to the job.

BLM-Alaska’s newest field manager looks forward to getting to know the people of rural Alaska who live near and rely on BLM-managed public lands.

Jim Fincher was District Ranger at the Glacier Ranger District (Girdwood), Chugach National Forest, for the last six years. There he managed a staff of 70+ permanent and seasonal employees, 2.1 million acres, and an annual budget of over \$3 million. Under his leadership, the Glacier Ranger District expanded its use of public/private partnerships. The innovative Whistle Stop Project is one such partnership. The Glacier Ranger District and the Alaska Railroad teamed up to provide rail access to spectacular Spencer Glacier. The Chugach National Forest is the only Forest in the nation to provide backcountry access via commercial railroad.

Fincher will now put that same creativity to work at the BLM

Anchorage Field Office. As Field Manager he oversees 19 million acres of BLM-managed public lands and resources in Southcentral Alaska, a staff of 40+, and an annual budget of \$5.7 million.

He brings a passion for multiple-use land management, for engaging public lands users in what he calls ‘shared stewardship’ by supporting community efforts and being responsive to customers needs. This includes a passion for getting youth—the stewards of the future—into the outdoors to discover what Alaska’s public lands have to offer.

Fincher holds a Master’s degree in soil science from the University of New Hampshire and a Bachelor’s degree in forest resource management from the University of Montana.

—Teresa McPherson,
teresa_mcpherson@blm.gov

Luise Woelflein

Excellence in Environmental Education

BLM-Alaska is celebrating one of its own. Luise Woelflein, Environmental Education Coordinator at the Campbell Creek Science Center, is a national silver award winner for the BLM's "2008 Excellence in Interpretation or Environmental Education" awards.

Luise has worked at the Campbell Creek Science Center for six years developing a variety of educational and outreach programs for more than 40,000 annual visitors who attend educational events and activities at the Center. Some of her many contributions include: "Celebrating Women in Science" program; astronomy, "Fireside Chat" and "Midsummer Nights" lecture series; early-morning bird walks; Girl Scout programs; and a renewable energy fair. Luise works with federal, state, corporate, and nonprofit partners to recruit high quality speakers, educators, volunteers, and contributors within the community.

National winners were selected from a pool of BLM nominees by a review panel of both BLM staff and partner-group representatives. This year's winners demonstrated an exceptional ability to create outstanding interpretive and educational experiences and materials for users of public lands, while working with partners and communities.

"Luise is a creative and energetic educator," notes Joette Storm, president of Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center. "She develops programs with an attention to the needs of diverse groups in the audience. Her organizational skills are keen. She inspires others



Donna Gindie

Luise Woelflein teaching students during a compass reading activity at the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center.

to participate and her personality makes others want to join in the fun."

Photos from many events at Campbell Creek Science Center usually show Luise surrounded by young participants, all intently listening to her and exuding enthusiasm for whatever she is doing with them. Luise is one of those rare leaders who never lose the gift of seeing the world for its possibilities and being able to communicate that to people of all ages.

Luise will receive her award in person at the "2008 Excellence in Interpretation" awards ceremony on Nov. 13, 2008, in Portland, Oregon, in conjunction with the National Association for Interpretation's 2008 National Workshop.

—Caron Gibson
caron_a_gibson@blm.gov



Craig McCaa

Long Lost Letter



Craig McCaa

Central Yukon Field Office archaeologist Bill Hedman reads a 1933 letter postmarked in Paris, France. He found the letter tucked inside the wall of a historic cabin near Wiseman, Alaska. In the letter, a friend asks Wiseman miner Bobby Jones to look after his mining equipment on the Hammond River while he's overseas conducting business. Hedman led a team of archaeologists who studied cabin ruins and other historic sites on Nolan Creek in August.

Cool, Wet Summer



Craig McCaa

(above) An RV caravan on the Taylor Highway;
(below and right) tourists and bus at Coldfoot.
The cool and rainy weather in most of Alaska was an important factor in limiting the 2008 fire season. Snow fell in the Brooks Range as late as June 20, and many areas had to deal with flooding.



Craig McCaa



Craig McCaa

MANAGING YOUR PUBLIC LANDS

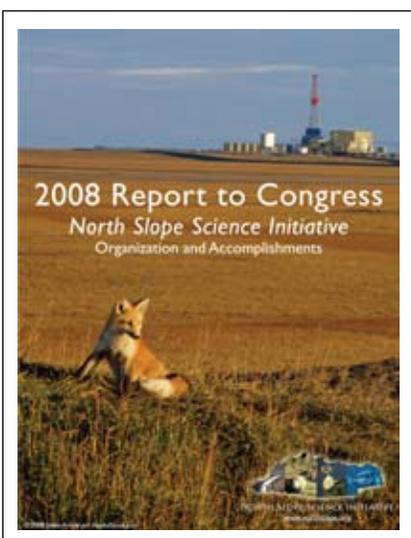
AN UPDATE ON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

The BLM develops resource management plans (RMPs) for all of its lands to manage resource preservation and multiple uses. These plans guide day-to-day decisions and future management actions. During the past year, several of these plans were completed or are nearly complete. Look for an upcoming article in *Frontiers* winter edition featuring several of these plans and visit the BLM-Alaska Planning Web site to see these plans and read how the comprehensive planning process works.

- **Bay (1.9 million acres):** The BLM released the Bay proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Bristol Bay and Goodnews Bay region on Dec. 7, 2007, and the protest period ended Jan. 14, 2008. Protest letters went out on Sept. 30, 2008. The BLM expects to release the signed Record of Decision and final Bay RMP/EIS during Nov. 2008.
- **East Alaska (7.1 million acres):** The BLM released the East Alaska Record of Decision on Sept. 7, 2007. The BLM is currently implementing the East Alaska RMP/EIS, including developing implementation timelines for the Slana Settlement area, Delta Range, and other East Alaska areas and releasing 82,500 acres from the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Utility Corridor under Public Land Order 5150. BLM-Alaska will soon release a proposed action for the Delta National Wild, Scenic, and Recreation River corridor.
- **Ring of Fire (1.3 million acres):** The BLM released the Ring of Fire Record of Decision on Mar. 21, 2008, after resolving two protests. The Ring of Fire planning area includes Southeast Alaska, Southcentral Alaska, and the Aleutian Islands. Soon the BLM will begin work on an amendment to the RMP, to reconsider whether the Haines planning block meets the criteria for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).
- **Kobuk-Seward Peninsula (11.9 million acres):** The BLM released the proposed RMP/EIS on Sept. 28, 2007, and the Record of Decision on Sept. 4, 2008.
- **Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (4.6 million acres):** The BLM released the final Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/EIS on May 23, 2008 and the Record of Decision on July 16, 2008. On Sept. 24, 2008, the BLM held an oil and gas lease sale that sold 150 tracts in both the Northeast and Northwest portions of the NPR-A.
- **Colville River:** The BLM released the Colville River Special Management Area RMP and EIS in July 2008.
- **Eastern Interior (34 million acres/8 million BLM-managed):** On Aug. 15, 2008, the BLM completed the public scoping period. The BLM will begin working on alternatives for this plan after information from the University of Alaska Fairbanks October Recreation Focus Group meetings becomes available, as part of benefits-based recreation management. The draft RMP is expected in May 2009, final RMP in April 2010, and Record of Decision in Sept. 2010.



For more information about BLM-Alaska's resource management plans visit <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning.html>



North Slope Science Initiative making inroads

The North Slope Science Initiative reached a major milestone this fall with its first Report to Congress. The report highlights NSSI's history, organization, and early accomplishments. The NSSI successfully brought together the major resource managers on the North Slope to address the implications of energy development and climate change in the arctic. The organization coordinates workshops on caribou, geographic information systems, database integration, and arctic fisheries. The NSSI continues to work closely with its member agencies, academic institutions, the National Science Foundation, and non-governmental organizations. The Report to Congress will soon be posted on the NSSI Web site (www.northslope.org).

The NSSI has worked on updated land cover mapping, water quality and hydrology measurement, geographic information, and sharing scientific data among its member agencies. The NSSI was one of the major sponsors for the Oct. 28-30, 2008, United States and Canada Northern Oil and Gas Research Forum in Anchorage, which addressed the status and future directions for the Beaufort Sea, North Slope and Mackenzie Delta.

—Denny Lassuy
denny_lassuy@fws.gov



Kevin Keeler

Campbell Tract facility

New Street Names for Campbell Tract and Campbell Creek Science Center

When an emergency earlier this year at BLM's Campbell Creek Science Center prompted a call into the Municipality of Anchorage's 9-1-1 system, emergency responders had trouble finding the Center, located on an unnamed access road about one mile from Elmore Road, which was its address. This incident prompted the city to rename the two access roads, which created a change of address for the facilities. This change will help emergency responders and more than 140,000 annual visitors find these facilities more easily.

BLM Campbell Creek Science Center
5600 Science Center Drive
 and
BLM Campbell Tract facility
4700 BLM Road

—Teresa McPherson,
 teresa_mcpherson@blm.gov

BLM-Alaska Listening Session for Tribes in Anchorage

BLM-Alaska invited 229 tribes, as well as other Alaska Native groups and individuals, to attend a Listening Session at the Hilton Anchorage Hotel Oct. 22, 2008. About 30 people took this opportunity to discuss the BLM's cultural consultation process with tribes and other subjects that affect Alaska Native communities.

Water Data on the Gulkana and Delta

Thanks to new equipment installed on the Gulkana National Wild and Scenic River and the Delta National Wild, Scenic and Recreational River this summer by the BLM's Glennallen Field Office, you can see how high and fast the waters are flowing on these rivers—in real-time in the Internet. This is a great resource for people who float, fish, and use these rivers year-round. The information may also help river users avoid the dangers of fast and high water. Educational institutions, such as the University of Alaska Fairbanks, can use the hydrologic information when researching climate change.

The Sutron Data Loggers collect river depth, temperature, and stream flow measurements, and transmit this data by satellite for posting on the Internet. The Glennallen Field Office installed the loggers at Gulkana River's Paxson Outlet and near Delta River's Garret Creek.

In addition to providing this information for river users, the new equipment may help the BLM in its ongoing efforts to get Alaska water rights for these rivers.

Mike Sondergaard, BLM-Alaska natural resource specialist, explains that "Alaska is growing and the [water] resources are more in demand. One of the [objectives] of river management plans is to acquire water rights from the State of Alaska to guarantee water for fisheries and recreation." Reserving instream water flow rights is necessary to help the BLM protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, migration, and maintain high-quality recreation opportunities.

The BLM filed instream flow applications with the State of Alaska over a decade ago for five Wild and Scenic Rivers, including Beaver Creek, Birch Creek, Gulkana, Unalakleet, and the mainstem Fortymile rivers. Last year, BLM applied for the North Fork Fortymile River. BLM did receive the water rights for Beaver Creek on May 26, 1989, but has not received any of the other water rights.

To find the river data, visit the hydrology section under Specialty Areas of the National Weather Service's Web site <http://www.arh.noaa.gov/> or visit either of the river sites and check out the water gauges from BLM Glennallen Field Office Web site <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo.html>.

—Chad Cook, BLM Student Intern



Chad Cook

SAFETY ZONE



Our folks in the BLM-Alaska Safety office have been humming lyrics once immortalized in song by Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, Danny Kaye, and Vera Ellen, “Snow, Snow, Snow, Snooooooow!” It’s time for a seasonal reminder from BLM-Alaska’s Safety Office.

First and most importantly, remember to plan for cold weather and dress appropriately in the event of an emergency or evacuation. Keep extra gear (such as a jacket, boots, rain gear, etc.) near your work area.

1. Wear layers as the temperature drops.
2. Stow a jacket or other outer gear near your work area.
3. Stow appropriate gear (including food and water) in your vehicle in case of a breakdown, especially if you end up in an area that has poor cell phone coverage.

The weather in Alaska can change drastically, so be prepared! Use that dividend or gas incentive cash to buy yourself a little “peace of mind” insurance. The following is a checklist to remind drivers how to stay safe and enjoy the changing seasons here in Alaska.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get a tune-up | <input type="checkbox"/> Use snow tires and/or studs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check battery | <input type="checkbox"/> Carry tire chains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check coolant | <input type="checkbox"/> Carry supplies (clothing, food, water, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fix leaks | <input type="checkbox"/> Carry a cell phone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check wipers | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean off your car |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a full gas tank | <input type="checkbox"/> Allow extra time and go slow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fill washer fluid | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not drive distracted! Focus on driving. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carry sand bags | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install block heater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check rear defroster | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Know your car | |

For information regarding safety or occupational health issues, please contact a BLM-Alaska Safety Office:

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—Robin Wellhouse
Robin_Wellhouse@blm.gov

BLM Seeks Landscape Approach to Range Management for Reindeer Grazing



Reindeer herd grazing near Nome, Alaska, in January 2008.

The BLM Anchorage Field Office is developing a programmatic environmental analysis (EA) for reindeer grazing on the Seward Peninsula in western Alaska. The BLM held a series of public scoping meetings last spring and summer throughout the area to gather information on issues of environmental concern. Our staff is now analyzing this information, which includes local knowledge from herders, research data, and lessons learned from international reindeer management practices. The programmatic EA is a landscape-level approach that blends Alaska Native traditions and cultural values with modern science in the decision-making process. The BLM expects to complete the EA by the end of 2008.

Herders are currently operating under one-year permits that expire Dec. 31, 2008. When completed, the programmatic EA will identify land health standards and adaptive management tools appropriate to reindeer grazing in this unique northern Alaska tundra environment.

New Snowshoes and Sound System for Campbell Creek Science Center

Friends of the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center received a \$12,648 grant from the Rasmuson Foundation to purchase 118 pairs of snowshoes for youth and adults and a new sound system for the Center’s multipurpose room. The new snowshoes will replace the Science Center’s 10-year-old inventory. These snowshoes will enable children and adults to “take it outside” during the winter months, explore the forests of Campbell Tract and facilitate a variety of educational activities, including animal tracking, orienteering, and nature hikes. The new sound system will improve communications during public events hosted at the Center.

—Teresa McPherson,
teresa_mcpherson@blm.gov

National Public Lands Day

A record 640 participants came out to celebrate National Public Lands Day on the BLM Campbell Tract on Sept. 27, topping the 2007 record of 515 participants. The event was hosted by the BLM Anchorage Field Office and its Take Pride in America partner, the Municipality of Anchorage. Volunteer groups included Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, the Civil Air Patrol, the U.S. Air Force, faith-based organizations, and high school service clubs. After a full morning of outdoor projects, participants enjoyed a pizza luncheon, compliments of the Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center, followed by the Center’s annual open house celebration. The open house featured a Junior Iditarod Sled Dog racer and her dog team to highlight the ongoing Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial celebration.

Frontiers Flashes

—continued from page 14

(right) Southeast Alaska Guidance Association (SAGA) members cut logs donated by Fort Richardson into firewood for the Science Center biomass boiler. (far right) Science Center instructor Brian Lax giving out stickers during the Passport Game at the Science Center open house. (below) SAGA members split logs for biomass boiler, used to heat the Science Center. (bottom right) Dale Meyers, Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance board member, explains the parts of a historic dogsled at the Science Center open house.

Photos by Thom Jennings.



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BLM-ALASKA FRONTIERS... From the Editor

This issue of BLM Frontiers is later than we planned, as we wanted to give you the results of the Sept. 24 Oil and Gas Lease Sale for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.



We hope you find this issue interesting and look forward to any comments or feedback you may wish to provide. We're getting more requests for e-mail notification of the electronic versions of BLM Frontiers and printing fewer hard copies than in the past. Our enthusiastic and dedicated writers and photographers make BLM Frontiers what it is. We're also lucky to have a graphic designer who does computer magic to make our newsletter come alive. As managing editor, these people make this publication a joy to work on.

Thank you for your interest in BLM Frontiers.

—Karen J. Laubenstein
 Managing Editor

BLM-Alaska Frontiers

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